

REMARKS

Claims 1-19, as amended, remain herein.

Applicants and their attorneys appreciate the courtesies extended in the Examiner interview conducted October 24, 2007. The claims as amended herein were discussed. The Examiner stated that the amendments to claims 5, 8 and 9 would overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejection relating to the term “calibre.” The Examiner also indicated that the amendments to independent claim 1 appeared to overcome the prior art presently of record, but reserved the right to conduct a further search of the amended claims.

1. Claims 5, 8-10 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. As discussed in the interview, claims 5, 8 and 9 have been amended to clarify the relationship between the skirt and the calibre of the sub-band to overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

2. Claims 1, 2, 4, 8-10, 16 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Campoli U.S. Patent 4,444,113. As discussed in the interview, claim 1 has been amended to recite the skirt removably attached to and fully covering the circumferential exterior surface of the sub-band. These limitations are not disclosed in Campoli U.S. Patent 4,444,113. Thus, Campoli is an inadequate basis for rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 8-10, 16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

3. Claims 5-7 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Campoli and Gotz et al. U.S. Patent 4,833,995. These claims depend from independent claim 1. Campoli fails to disclose a skirt removably attached to and fully covering the circumferential exterior surface of a sub-band, as recited in applicants’ independent claim 1. Gotz fails to provide what Campoli

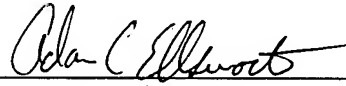
lacks. Gotz discloses a segmented thrust ring but fails to disclose a skirt. Thus, neither Campoli nor Gotz, discloses every element of applicants' claim 1, from which claims 5-7 and 19 depend. Nor is there anything in any of Campoli, Gotz or anything else in this record that would suggest the desirability of combining any portions thereof effectively to anticipate or render obvious applicants' claimed invention. For the foregoing reasons, Campoli and Gotz are inadequate grounds of rejection of claims 5-7 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Accordingly, the application is now fully in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested. The PTO is hereby authorized to charge/credit any fee deficiencies or overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-4293. If further amendments would place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is invited to call applicants' undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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